

News Release

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

ATTORNEY GENERAL GODDARD MEETS WITH MEXICO'S AG ON CROSS BORDER ISSUES, EXTRADICTIONS

(Phoenix, Arizona—October 21, 2003) Attorney General Terry Goddard is in Mexico today on a three-day trip to meet with Mexican Attorney General Lic. Alejandro Ramos Flores and other law enforcement and Foreign Ministry officials.

Goddard began the trip in Monterrey, Nuevo Leon yesterday with a series of meetings with Federal and State officials to discuss better cross-border cooperation in law enforcement and the apprehension of fugitives. During the meeting with Attorney General of Nuevo Leon, Lic. Luis Carlos Trevino Berchelmann, the two Attorneys General agreed to open regular lines of communication in efforts related to criminal investigations and public safety. Such a relationship currently exists between the State of Sonora, Mexico and Arizona and is being used as a model for opening new avenues in this arena.

This evening, Goddard will fly to Mexico City and meet with Lic. Arturo Dager Gomez of the Mexican Foreign Ministry to discuss Arizona's efforts in extraditing criminal fugitives from Arizona who are suspected of hiding in Mexico. Although extraditions are a federal matter, it is the Arizona Attorney General's office that initiates efforts with the U.S. State Department to open cases with their counterparts at the Mexican Foreign Ministry.

Tomorrow Goddard will meet with representatives from the U.S. Department of Justice and will be briefed on U.S. Federal law enforcement efforts in Mexico that may help bring Arizona's fugitives to justice. Among the most significant meeting will be with Mexican Attorney General Lic. Alejandro Ramos Flores, which is expected to center on Article 4 prosecutions. The Mexican penal code allows for prosecution of Mexican nationals in Mexican Courts regardless of where the crime was committed. These are known as Article 4 prosecutions. Former Assistant Attorney General Norma Martens, who accompanied Goddard on the trip, created the Foreign Prosecution Unit (FPU) in the Arizona Attorney General's Office in 1992. Martens now serves as Governor Janet Napolitano's Policy Advisor on Mexico and Latin America.

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Assistant Attorney General Adrian Fontes now heads the FPU. He is with the Attorney General in Mexico. The FPU has been successful in the past in prosecuting Arizona crimes utilizing Article 4. After the defendants are tried and sentenced in Article 4 cases, they serve their time in Mexican prisons. "No longer can the international border be seen as a way to escape justice, " said Attorney General Goddard. "With Norma's great foundation and Adrian's aggressive commitment to justice, we can assure that international boundaries are no longer safe-havens for criminals."